

REMARKS

The Office Action of March 17, 2009 has been received and its contents carefully considered. A Request for Continued Examination under 37 CFR §1.114 is submitted herewith.

Claims 1-9, 16, 17 and 20-22 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1-9, 16, 17 and 20 are amended. Claims 21 and 22 are added. Support for these added claims may be found in Figs. 5 and 8 of the disclosure of this application. Claims 10-15, 18 and 19 are canceled. Claims 1 and 16 are independent. Reconsideration of this application in view of the above amendments and the flowing remarks is respectfully requested.

The Office Action objects to claims 10-15, 18 and 19 for failing to further limit subject matter of claims from which they depend. The cancellation of the above enumerated claims renders this objection moot. Withdrawal of the pending objection is thus respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as indefinite. The cancellation of claims 10-15, 18 and 19 renders the above rejection moot with respect to those claims. The Office Action asserts that the term "image information" is indefinite. The above noted term is amended to "digital watermark information" in order to overcome this objection. Support for this amendment may be found on page 11, lines 9-10 of the disclosure of this application. Applicants note that the term "image information" replaces the term "additional information" in the claims. Thus the disclosure of this application notes a correspondence between the terms "additional information" and "digital watermark information" within the context of the disclosure and the prosecution history of this application. Since, the amendment of the term "image information" to "digital watermark

information” is definite. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the pending rejection of the Office Action under §112 are thus respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-3, 10-13, 16, 18 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over JP 2001-218030 to *Oki* (hereinafter “*Oki*”). However, the *Oki* reference cannot reasonably be considered to teach, or to have suggested, the combination of all of the features recited in the pending claims, as amended.

Claim 1 recites, among other features, a digital watermark information modification component which generates copied image data by embedding the new digital watermark information into image data obtained by removing the digital watermark information from the input image data when the digital watermark information complies with a predetermined finite copy condition stored in the digital watermark information.

Oki teaches that a database in a printer stores information controlling the number of times a document or pages within the document may be copied, as discussed in paragraphs [0046]-[0052]. Here, the print count is stored in the printer database to ensure that print copy control is maintained across multiple print requests originating from multiple host computers. The *Oki* reference further teaches that a visible or invisible digital watermark may be embedded in the document to prevent any copying, as discussed in paragraphs [0060]-[0061]. The *Oki* reference teaches either allowing for finite copying based on a printer database, or outright preventing copying based on the watermark itself.

Therefore, *Oki* fails to teach, or to have suggested, a digital watermark information modification component which generates copied image data by embedding the new digital watermark information into image data obtained by removing the digital watermark information from the input image data when the digital watermark information complies with

said predetermined finite copy condition stored in the digital watermark information, as recited in claim 1.

The Office Action rejects claims 4-9, 14, 15, 17 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Oki* in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,664,976 to *Lofgren et al.* (hereinafter "*Lofgren*"). However, *Lofgren* fails to overcome the deficiencies of *Oki* as discussed above. Therefore, no permissible combination of the applied references can reasonably be considered to teach, or to have suggested, the combination of all of the features recited in claim 1. Claim 16 recites features similar to those recited in claim 1, and is patentably distinct over the applied references for the reasons given above with respect to the patentability of claim 1.

Claims 2-9, 17 and 20-22 are also allowable, at least for their dependence on allowable independent claims 1 and 16 as discussed above, as well as for the separately patentable subject matter that each of these claims recites. The cancellation of claims 10-15, 18 and 19 renders the above rejections under §103 moot with respect to those claims.

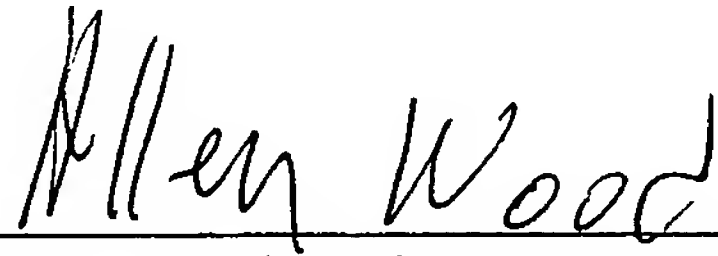
Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the pending rejections of the Office Action under §103 are respectfully requested.

For the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

AW/ARK/pq


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AMENDMENT

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